

long period of time. This bill is way overdue. Senator ROCKEFELLER has worked very hard in bringing the product to the floor. It is a good product.

We had an issue today that came up, and Senator ROCKEFELLER offered an amendment which takes away that as an issue. My friends, the Republicans, obviously, want to kill this bill to add to the other list they have sent to the graveyard. They are using an excuse: Well, we don't have the ability to offer amendments.

Mr. President, I have offered them anything possible to make sure they can offer all the amendments they want. The distinguished Senator from Texas, Mrs. KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, obviously does not like some of the tax portions of this bill. Offer an amendment to try to take them out. I have offered the Republican leader: Give us a list of the amendments you want to offer. This is very standard procedure around here. No response to that.

It is very obvious to me this is an effort to kill this bill. Let's be logical. We are on the floor. I have said: Any amendments you want to offer that are germane or relevant to this bill, you can do that. Now, that is very wide. It allows anything that relates basically to transportation to be offered on this bill. But they have turned that down.

They have broken all records for filibuster—they, the Republicans. On this one, on the motion to proceed, I said on the floor earlier this week, this was not their fault. We did not have the substitute Senators ROCKEFELLER and BAUCUS had worked on. It was not ready until Monday night. But it was ready Tuesday morning, and they had every opportunity to work at that time and give us a list of amendments they wanted to do. We would give them ours.

I was told today, when the Durbin amendment was filed, that they wanted to offer the next amendment. They wanted to offer it from Senator BUNNING. No problem. We have been waiting all day for the language of that amendment, which is probably nonexistent.

We have been fair. We have been reasonable. But, obviously, we are now at a point where they are back to their old tricks and just killing the bill. They should just tell us this rather than play the games. They should say: We do not want this bill.

I have spoken to the Republican leader saying: If we really want to get this bill done, why don't I file cloture then, because no one seems to be wanting to offer any amendments. He said: No, it's too early. You have not allowed us to offer any amendments. I say: Offer amendments.

So this is really, Mr. President, a typical procedure around here, that the minority, wanting to maintain the status quo with air travel, as everything else, puts us in a position where we have no alternative but to either pull the bill or file cloture, and they said they will not give us the extra nine votes we need.

Remember, Mr. President, this bill has, for example, the Passenger Bill of Rights in it so that when people are held up on a flight—you are on a runway for hours at a time—there are certain rights passengers have. All those things that cause so much consternation when you are trying to travel on an airplane—the Passenger Bill of Rights addresses many of those. But with Republicans that will go down the tubes with everything else in this bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am happy to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I know the Senator and I spoke earlier, and I heard his conversation on the floor earlier.

I would say, through the Chair, if the Republican minority came forward, in the morning, with a list of germane amendments to this bill, it is my understanding the majority leader has said we will entertain and consider those amendments. This is open for an amendment process, for deliberation, and for votes on this important aviation safety bill. Is that correct?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I even went one step further. I said the distinguished Republican leader would have the right to look at our amendments. It would not be just me; I want him in on the deal.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I can further ask the majority leader: The Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON—who has put a lot of time in this, along with Senator ROCKEFELLER—has objected to two or three provisions in the bill from the Finance Committee related to transportation and financing. I have said I support those provisions. But if the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON, wants to offer a motion in the morning to strike those provisions, is the majority leader saying—I ask through the Chair—is the majority leader saying it is her right to offer that motion to strike?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Illinois, I asked our staff: When we close today, let's not have morning business. Let's go directly to the bill. But we found that was fruitless. They did not want us to go to the bill. I have said so many different times, in so many different ways, that we want to finish this legislation. We want to work with Republicans to finish this legislation.

And I say to my friend, the Senator from Texas, it is my understanding, has asked other people: Why don't you offer the amendment to strike all this stuff? For whatever reason, she does not want to have her fingerprints on eliminating this amendment, obviously. I just think it is really too bad.

I want this bill to go forward. The main thing I want is to make sure everyone understands we Democrats want to change things. We want change. We need change in a lot of different places, but one place we need change is the way air traffic is handled

today. And the Republicans, obviously, want it to stay the same; let's keep it the same; let's maintain the status quo.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I could ask the majority leader to yield for one other question.

It is my understanding, so far in this session, the Republicans have initiated 68 filibusters, which is an attempt to slow down or stop the business of the Senate. But that breaks all records in the Senate, and they are on course, if they continue at this pace, to offer over 100 filibusters before the end of the year, maybe even more.

I would like to ask the majority leader, if they continue trying to stop us from even bringing bills to the floor, debating them, amending them, and bringing them to a vote—I would like to ask the majority leader how we could reach a point where we actually do change things for the better, where we can see the progress that the American people expect.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are things we need to do. The No. 1 issue in America today: gas prices. We cannot go to gas prices because we are stuck on this thing that they will not let us move on, and that is the way it has been going since we took the majority. That is something they have had trouble getting over, that we are in the majority. It is a slim majority, but it is the majority, and because of that, we have the opportunity to determine what issues come to the floor. The issue that was long past due was FAA reauthorization. But they are stopping us from doing virtually anything that needs to be done for this country.

I have trouble understanding why they want to continue to up the record they have already broken. They broke the 2-year filibuster record in 10 months. But now I guess they want to keep adding to their record to see how many filibusters they can conduct. And they have been fairly successful stopping us from passing things that the American people want, such as the matter now on the floor. But energy legislation—they stopped us on that. That is to go to alternative energy so we do not have to use 21 million barrels of oil every day. We have wanted to do things dealing with education. We have not been able to do that. Health care, we haven't been able to do that. Things that the American people want are being stopped because of the Republicans' love of the status quo.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.  
TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is nothing more to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:01 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 1, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.